



Pieces of Iowa's Past, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides weekly during the legislative session, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All historical publications are reproduced here with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

January 26, 2011

THIS WEEK: Twenty-fourth Iowa General Assembly

BACKGROUND: The Twenty-fourth General Assembly convened in Des Moines at the present day Capitol on January 11, 1892, and adjourned on March 30—an 80-day session. The Capitol had been dedicated eight years before in 1884. There were 150 members in the legislature. In the Senate, there were 25 Democratic members, 24 Republican members, and Senator Perry Engle who is listed in legislative histories as both an Independent and a member of the Union-Labor party. The House of Representatives had 54 Republicans, 45 Democrats, and Representative Dan Campbell who was an Independent. Lieutenant Governor Samuel Bestow presided over the Senate, and William Mitchell was Speaker of the House. Governor Horace Boies began serving his second term in 1892. Governor Boies, a resident of Waterloo and an attorney, had been inaugurated for his first term in 1890 at the age of 62. The 1890 United States census showed Iowa's population had grown to 1,912,297.



Governor Horace Boies

(b. December 7, 1827 – d. April 4, 1923)

TWENTY-FOURTH IOWA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Senate Journal includes the "Committee on Penitentiaries and Pardons" report on the contracts with the Fort Madison Chair Company, the Iowa Farming Tool Company, and the Huiscamp Brothers Company for more than 300 laborers from Fort Madison Penitentiary to work for these companies. The duties of the Doorkeepers and Sergeant-at-Arms are listed. Among those duties, "to ensure the chamber is lighted up to an hour not later than 10:00 p.m." Petitions were presented asking that women be granted equal political rights with men. One petition from the citizens of DeWitt asked the Twenty-fourth General Assembly "to revise the revenue laws; to protect the makers of promissory notes; asking for the passage of the Australian Ballot law; and favoring election of US Senators by direct vote of the people." There was also mentioned (on more than one occasion) the problem with a deadlock because of "the one Independent senator, Perry Engle."

The Journal of the House of Representatives includes an announcement from the Chief Clerk that "Joseph Cooper of Polk County had been appointed the Chief Clerk's Page." A resolution from the Association of Pioneer Lawmakers of Iowa stated their hearty approval of a bill "for an act to promote historical collections in the Capitol and to appoint a curator of historical collections." The Board of Commissioners of the Iowa Sailors' and Soldiers' Monument made the following report: Forty-eight designs and plans were received by the office of the governor. Some designs were columns, others arches, and some memorial halls. The Commission unanimously recommended the design of Harriet A. Ketchum. There was a resolution to place a telephone in the Clerk's office, room number 5. A concurrent resolution was passed that noted "the Iowa Exhibit at the Columbian Exhibition be closed on Sundays."

Below: A watercolor of Harriet Ketchum's original design for the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument hangs in the Senate Majority Leaders offices. Ketchum passed away before the monument was completed.



Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument – Harriet Ketchum Original Design

